The
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For Conscience' Sake

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German Draft Passed, Recognizes COs

A draft law that would subject all West German males more than 18 years of age to compulsory military service was approved in the Bundestag on July 6. Passage came only after bitter debate, the longest in the history of the West German Parliament.

The conscription law was pushed through by Chancellor Adenauer's government despite vigorous opposition. There was strong opposition to the draft outside Parliament also, including youth groups and the Evangelical (Protestant) Church.

Under the new law, about 10,000,000 German males will be subject to the draft. But fewer than 400,000 will be under conscription at any one time.

Conscientious Objectors will be permitted to perform non-military service in lieu of bearing arms. According to reports NSBRO has received from Germany, the government is willing to work out a system of alternate service similar to that in the United States.

The new law gives those persons already in the armed services an opportunity to declare their position if they consider themselves conscientious objectors. Otherwise a person must declare himself a CO before entering the service. His declaration will then be taken before a review board. After investigation and examination this board will render a decision in each individual case. According to spokesmen in the German Embassy in Washington, D. C., this is the first time in German history that any legal provision has been made recognizing the CO.

The draft bill also contains provisions for a system of deferments sparing most men with previous military service,

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Mennonite CO Gets 2-Year Prison Term

Roy C. Derstine, Souderton, Pennsylvania, was sentenced on July 10 to prison for two years because he refused to perform civilian work. Derstine had been found guilty in Philadelphia on June 2.

Derstine had been classified as a conscientious objector by his local board. However, he contended that the government had no right to force him to do civilian work. He presented his own testimony in court without aid of legal counsel.

Federal Judge Grim, in sentencing Derstine for two years, stated that "the Government has been very liberal in allowing objectors to serve their term in state hospitals. You have refused to do that and in fairness to my obligation to the U. S. Government as well as to the men who do serve, I am giving you the same term in jail you would have served in the Army. I will not allow you to set your own standards in your conception of the draft law even though it is under religious beliefs."

Derstine will likely be sent to the Federal Prison at Danbury, Connecticut. He is married and has one child.

U. of Md. Refuses ROTC Exemptions for COs

The University of Maryland Board of Regents decided on June 22 to continue compulsory military training with no exemptions for conscientious objectors. The decision was taken after Enos S. Stockbridge, board member, told the members that the University could legally grant exemptions or continue its old compulsory policy.

Requirement of military training became an issue several months ago when

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COs Forced To Stay In Prison Barracks Without Food

What was first reported to be a "hunger strike" by five Amish COs at Mill Point (West Virginia) Prison Camp turned out to be a month of enforced confinement because prison officials ordered the COs to wear clothes prohibited by their religious sect. A satisfactory solution to the problem was reached only after the COs had spent one week in their barracks without any food and three more weeks with only one meal a day being sent in by the prison authorities.

The Amish COs wore the usual clothes of their sect which differ in design and color from the usual khaki work clothes worn by the other prisoners. Two of the COs had been at the prison camp for almost a year and had never encountered any opposition to wearing their traditional clothes. When three more members of their group were received at the prison camp, however, someone in authority decided to make an issue of the matter and ordered the men to abandon their distinctive garb and wear the regulation prison clothes.

The COs refused to put on the prison clothes and the next morning discovered that all of their clothing had been taken from their lockers. Without the clothes they could not go to the dining hall for their meals. They were told that prison clothes were available.

After a week without any food whatsoever, except pieces of left-over bread and other items which other prisoners brought back to the barracks for them, the men began receiving one meal a day from the prison dining hall. They continued to live on one meal a day for ap-

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Kansas Ends CO Pay Discrimination

The Kansas State Board of Social Welfare has finally taken action which will end discrimination against COs in regard to salaries and employment rights. Kansas is the latest state to abolish such discrimination and while there are still cases of individual COs paid less than the prevailing wages, it is not known that any states are persisting in a general policy of discrimination against COs.

The Kansas action consisted of three parts: (1) that under the State Board of Social Welfare of Kansas there shall be no more discrimination against conscientious objector employees in positional ratings or salaries; (2) that they shall have all the same rights and privileges as any other state employee; (3) that this is to be effective starting July 1, 1956.

This action, however, does not completely remedy the problem of COs receiving less than prevailing wages in Kansas. Some conscientious objectors are working in institutions under the State Board of Health which has separate administration from the State Board of Social Welfare. Officials of the State Board of Health are now considering the problem and it is hoped in the near future it will take a similar position as the Board of Social Welfare.

Approximately 200 conscientious objectors have been working in the state of Kansas.

Local Board Tries To "Persuade" CO

Recently when a conscientious objector from a midwestern state was denied the I-O classification by the state appeal board, a local board clerk used some very persuasive arguments to dissuade him from refusing induction or attempting to secure a Presidential Appeal. The local board clerk told him that if he did not choose to present himself for induction that three things were certain to happen.

First, advertisements concerning the young man's conscientious objection would be placed in the local newspapers. This particular community has some strong sentiments against conscientious objectors. Secondly, the clerk stated that a petition would be started in the CO's home town designed to prevent any further consideration of his CO claim. Finally, the clerk stated that if the CO persisted in his desire to be lawfully recognized that the local board would resign in protest.

These threats were made to the CO in the presence of both his parents, who did not share his beliefs and who would be subjected to considerable community pressures if the local board's threats were carried out.

The actions of the local board in this situation were later repudiated by National Headquarters of Selective Service. The CO's classification was ordered transferred to another local board where he could receive unbiased consideration.

I-W Opportunities In the Near East

Four overseas teaching fellowships are available to qualified COs for teaching positions in the Friends School in Ramallah, near Jerusalem, Jordan. The following teaching posts are open for the 1956-1957 school year: English teacher, mathematics and/or physics teacher, history teacher, and music teacher. All of these positions require a minimum of a B.A. degree.

In addition to teaching duties, staff members share in boarding supervision and extra curricular activities such as scouts, hobby clubs, work shop, photographic dark room, athletics and dramatics.

The students in this school come from widely varied home and religious backgrounds. The town of Ramallah is in the center of the troubled relations between the Arabs and Israel. Delbert Reynolds, school principal, states that "There is a great need for dedicated workers who by the example of their own lives may break down the barriers of misundertsanding and distrust which block the way to world community."

The town of Ramallah is located on a ridge of mountains which gives it three months of cold weather a year, but even in the winter it is less than an hour's drive from the tropical sun of Jericho.

Interested individuals should address letters of application to: Principal, Friends Boys School, Bireh-Ramallah, Jordan, with a copy of the application going to the American Friends Board of Missions, 101 Quaker Hill Drive, Richmond, Indiana.

Draft Statistics Now Reveal Number of Fathers

The official Selective Service statistics on the number of registrants in each classification now reveal the number of fathers in those classifications available for military service or civilian work of national importance. This is necessary because of the recent change in regulations which places fathers lower in the order of call than non-fathers.

On April 1, 1956, there were 540 conscientious objectors classified I-O listed as fathers. At the same time there were 4,603 conscientious objectors classified as I-O listed as non-fathers. Since the new regulations stipulate that non-fathers must be drafted before fathers, it would appear that those COs classified as I-O who are fathers are practically draft free.

The same situation applies to those men classified I-A and I-A-O. There are 100,131 fathers 19 through 25, while there are 1,424,014 non-fathers.

On April 1, there were 2,727 conscientious objectors classified I-W who were at work, and 3,746 I-Ws who had been released.

Other statistics from the classification picture as of April 1, 1956 which might be of interest to REPORTER readers are the following: Agricultural deferment, 33,669; Ministers and Divinity students, 57,779; Unfit for service (IV-F), 2,151,-469; Student deferment, 158,967; Total number of registrants, 16,482,226.

Russian CO Reports Alternate Service Still Possible in USSR

A recent Russian visitor to the United States has reported that the decree of 1918 establishing provisions for conscientious objectors in Russia is still in effect. The Russian visitor was a CO himself and had served his alternate service in an infectious disease hospital in Southern Russia. The idea of alternate service in civilian work of national importance, now part of the U. S. law, originated in Russia.

When the conscientious objector position of certain religious pacifist groups in Russia were threatened by the growing militarization in the latter part of the 19th century, the first plan of alternate service was worked out. In 1880 the first conscientious objectors were employed in the Russian Forestry Service planting and cultivating trees on the steepes of South Russia.

Originally the term of service was four years. Most of the expenses of this service were met by the churches to which the COs belonged. The first few years there were about 400 conscientious objectors involved in this program each year, but by 1913 there were about 1,000 per year.

During World War I Russian conscientious objectors also served in the hospitals in addition to forestry service. According to the estimates of the conscientious objector groups involved, there were about 12,000 Russian COs during World War I, almost the identical number as served in alternate service in the United States during World War II.

There apparently was a temporary halt to alternate service arrangements at the time of the revolution and change in governments in 1917-1918. However, in October, 1918, Trotzky issued a decree that religious conscientious objectors, who upon investigation were found to be sincere, could be assigned to alternate service in lieu of military service. Under this decree a system of tribunals was set up, with the final determination as to whether a man's claim as a conscientious objector should be recognized made by the People's Courts. It is estimated that during the Russian Civil War in 1919 and 1920 about 8,000 conscientious objectors were exempted from military service and served in alternate service.

From this time on, however, the law was not consistently applied, although the 1918 decree was never revoked. Apparently, local authorities were given a great deal of discretion. In some cases, prior to World War II, conscientious objectors were recognized and sent into alternate service, but in other cases there was little respect for the CO's alleged rights. Some alternate service camps were more like hard labor camps where the Government sent the conscientious objector for the purpose of breaking down his beliefs to the point where he would accept military service as the easier alternative.

Very little is known about the fate of conscientious objectors in Russia during the 1940's, but refugees from Russia interviewed in Germany after the war reported that hundreds were shot and other hundreds were forced to work in hard labor camps.

In addition to the report mentioned above by a recent Russian visitor to the U. S., there have been other fragmentary reports that there still are conscientious objectors in Russia, receiving a wide variety of treatment. It is claimed that the decree of 1918 still stands, but that there is no consistent administration of its provisions. A Russian officer in the Soviet military attache's office in Washington, when interviewed by NSBRO, was aware of earlier provisions but was not acquainted with any current regulations or activities in regard to conscientious objectors. However, it should be noted that this may not be significant since many American military officers would likewise know nothing of the provisions of the United States law for conscientious objectors.

German Draft Passed

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students, clergymen, and others who would suffer hardship.

Meanwhile, the East German government rejected a proposal by Evangelical Bishop Otto Dibelius of Berlin that legislation be approved recognizing the right of conscientious objectors to refuse military service.

Dr. Johannes Dieckmann, President of the East German Parliament, wrote Bishop Dibelius that in an era of nuclear weapons, refusal of military service by individuals would not prevent war.

"If refusal to do military service is given priority as an issue which concerns the whole of mankind," he stated, "then the problem gets out of focus and may lead to disastrous results."

UNIONS RECOGNIZE SECT

The AFL-CIO has recently declared that individual unions within its organization could waive membership and dues payment to members of religious sects with scruples against belonging to unions.

The German Baptist Brethren, who felt that unions sometimes used violence which they could not condone, had sought some alternate plan whereby their people could keep their jobs in a "closed shop" and yet not become union members. Such a plan included a willingness to contribute to charity an amount of money equal to union dues.

According to spokesmen for the German Baptist group, they are seeking the same kind of recognition in the labor-management area as the government has accorded to conscientious objectors under the Selective Service law.

COs Forced to Stay

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proximately three weeks until finally the the prison authorities allowed the men to alter the regular prison garb in such a way as would satisfy their religious convictions about the type of clothing they should wear. One of the Amish COs supervised the alterations and dyeing of the clothes and the group now seems entirely satisfied with the arrangement.

The Bureau of Prisons regrets the incident as "unfortunate", but offers no explanation why five young men serving prison sentences for conscience sake would have to be subjected to starvation diets for a month before a solution to the problem could be reached.

U. of Md. Refuses COs

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a student, Barry Carr, was suspended for refusing to continue his ROTC training. He subsequently was reinstated after agreeing to continue the course for the remainder of the year.

Dr. Louis L. Kaplan cast the only dissenting vote when the board voted on the issue. He said that conscientious objectors should be allowed to present their beliefs to a board similar to that recognized by the Federal Government.

NSBRO had worked with concerned individuals from Baltimore in preparation of a brief which was presented to the Board of Regents. It now seems unlikely that the University's policy can be changed until there is a test case which would challenge the ruling of the Board of Regents in the courts. A famous court case almost thirty years ago had ruled that the University of Maryland need not exempt COs.

Harsh Treatment of COs In World War I Recalled

Many people are not aware of the harsh treatment accorded conscientious objectors in World War I, a striking contrast to the present procedures. At that time there was no alternate service for conscientious objectors and they were automatically inducted into the armed forces when they were called and any refusal to comply with the military was handled under military law. Selective Service local boards did issue noncombatant certificates which were honored by the Army after induction. However, there were still 3,989 inductees who objected to and refused military service as conscientious objectors. Later most of these 3,989 inductees were assigned to noncombatant service or furloughed to civilian work.

However, there were 504 trials by court martial of conscientious objectors. The severity of their treatment is reflected in the following statistics.

Statistics of Court Martial Cases of Conscientious Objectors Under the Selective Service Act of 1917, Compiled to June 7, 1919

Total	
Tried by courts martial	504
Acquitted	1
Convicted and sentenced	503
Disapproved	53
Effective sentences	450
Original sentences of courts	
Death	17
Life	142
50 years or more	4
25 to 50 years	82
10 to 25 years	213
5 to 10 years	30
1 to 5 years	12
Less than 1 year	3
Total	503
Sentences as finally executed after review	
Death	None
Life	None
50 years	2
25 to 50 years	186
10 to 25 years	212
5 to 10 years	33
1 to 5 years	14
Less than 1 year	2
Sentence disapproved and accused released	53
Sentence suspended	1
Total	503

"Stars and Stripes" Features COs in Europe

A full-page article describing Pax, the Mennonite Central Committee designation for CO units serving in Europe, appeared in the feature section of "Stars and Stripes" on May 27. This newspaper, published for the U. S. armed forces in Europe, has a daily circulation of 150,000 reaching at least 24 countries.

The article, including pictures, described the work of the conscientious objectors in Europe in projects of agriculture, rehabilitation, and general relief activities. COs serving in Europe and North Africa under the MCC Pax organization now total 83. They are stationed in six countries, working at 16 different locations.

The article in "Stars and Stripes" also related some "Mennonite history and beliefs and gave an explanation of how conscientious objectors obtain the I-W classification and do civilian work. Following an earlier news release in that paper headed "U. S. Conscientious Objectors Rebuilding Vienna School", one of the daily staff writers visited Pax headquarters and the nearby refugee housing project at Enkenbach, Germany.

LABOR DRAFT PROPOSED

Conscientious objection to a labor draft may be a necessity if Government plans materialize in the event of another war. Acocrding to the National Association of Manufacturers, "the idea of drafting the civilian labor force, just as we draft our military requirements, has unfortunately gained many advocates in high places."

"Many who have been closest to the manpower thinking which has been done in recent months—and which now represents the thinking of top officials in Government—are alarmed at the provision for a far greater degree of Government compulsion and can either be justified or depended upon to produce the results desired."

Although a free labor program had been recommended, the N. A. M. reports that: "Yet it is our understanding that when this program, based on voluntarism, was submitted for government scrutiny, the idea of a voluntary manpower program for "all out" conditions was rejected. There was pressure for preparation of a second compulsory program to be resorted to in case the voluntary program be found wanting—and there is reason to believe that a predetermination exists to accept no recommendations not based on conciption."

NEWS BRIEFS

The Library of Congress has 130 entry cards catalogued under "Conscientious Objectors". In addition there is also a large amount of uncatalogued material, including many pamphlets and other documents. The 130 catalogue cards under "Conscientious Objectors" do not include much related material under the categories of "Pacifists", and other titles.

Chief of Staff Admiral Radford has proposed that the armed forces be reduced by approximately 800,000 men by 1960. This is a much more drastic reduction than formerly announced schedules that have reduced the Army to its present strength of about 1,030,000 men. Under Radford's proposal the Army would have about 580,000 men by 1960.

Some officials have already hinted that if re-enlistment and volunteer programs continue at their present rate that within another year there will be virtually no necessity for the draft.

The Defense Department in the United States still insists that it would be contrary to military security to discharge the occasional individual who becomes a conscientious objector to all forms of military service after he has been inducted. Although the Defense Department has periodically considered proposals which would allow for discharge of conscientious objectors, they have not yet succeeded in developing one which can secure the necessary approval to be put into effect.

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